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SUBJECT: TGG01: GEORGIA TASK FORCE SITUATION REPORT NO. 19

CLASSIFIED BY:DEBORAH SCHNEIDER, SENIOR WATCH OFFICER,
S/ES-O, REASON 1.4(D)

RUSSIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS

1. (SBU) Embassy Tbilisi could not confirm any Russian troop withdrawals. EU parliamentarians entered Gori after being stopped at the outskirts. They saw no troops in the city, but the Russian military has established checkpoints at major junctions along the road from Gori to Khashuri, giving them control of all the main east-west roads in the country.

2. (SBU)Speaker Bakradze told Ambassador Tefft that Georgian military intelligence reported the 71st and 50th Russian brigades at Gori have orders to move toward Tbilisi, but the embassy could not confirm this report.

3. (U)Russian soldiers told the BBC their final destination would be Tbilisi, and they may be in Georgia for up to a year.

4. (SBU)About 60 Russian vehicles reportedly deployed to

the town of Akhagori, about 40 kilometers NW of Tbilisi. Russian forces are trying to issue Russian passports to local residents, who were told they would need to "become Ossetian" or leave the area.

15. (SBU) Russian army units and Abkhazian separatist militants reportedly set up administrations in 13 villages in a UN-declared buffer zone near the Enguri River and separatists now control the Enguri hydropower plant, which supplies 80 percent of Georgia's hydroelectric power.

HUMANITARIAN ISSUES AND RESOURCES

16. (SBU) According to the GOG, damage to the Kaspi Railway Bridge could be repaired in approximately 10 days. The impact will be mitigated by work-arounds which do not require using rail traffic. The Russian military denied its forces were involved in destroying the bridge.

17. (U) Russian troops and separatists forced Georgian men to clean the streets of South Ossetia's bombed-out capital, Tskhinvali.

18. (SBU) The EU released 1.5 million euros for humanitarian assistance.

19. (SBU) Seven EUCOM C-130 flights delivered 98.5 tons of humanitarian relief supplies to Tbilisi. By August 18, a total of 12,000 sheets, 8,000 sleeping bags,

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6,000 blankets, and 900 cots will have been delivered to Tbilisi.

110. (SBU) A German team reports the commercial side of the port in Poti is operating.

NATO AND OSCE ASSISTANCE

111. (C) NATO members have not yet agreed on how to respond to Georgian requests for assistance. France and Germany are leading a contingent of Allies who do not want it to appear that NATO is becoming militarily involved in the conflict or taking sides. Pending further details on OSCE requests, the Allies decided to indicate they would "consider specific requests for support from the UN, EU, and OSCE for their activities in Georgia." The Political Committee will meet again August 18. EUR A/S Fried suggested that agreed-upon actions should be made public quickly, in order to replace an "Allies divided" story with "Allies united in providing assistance."

112. (SBU) EUR/RPM advised Finland to expeditiously request airlift from the United States for German and Ukrainian APCs, which have been offered to support an OSCE observation mission.

AMCITS AFFECTED BY FIRES

113. (SBU) Embassy Tbilisi has communicated with Amcits in areas affected by the fires. Several Amcits are considering leaving the Surami, Borjomi, and Chiatori areas. Approximately 30 unaccompanied Amcit minors are visiting relatives in Georgia. Post will issue a warden message regarding the fires.

114. (SBU) The two AmCit minor girls featured on Fox News remained with their grandmother in Sveri rather than evacuating due to nearby fires. Embassy Tbilisi suggested they go to Kutaisi, if necessary, where the

Embassy can more easily assist them in traveling on to Batumi.

¶15. Minimize considered.
RICE